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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [SU](#) [UN](#)  
SUBJECT: NCP DIVISIONS ON US SPECIAL ENVOY NATSIOS

Classified By: P/E CHIEF E. WHITAKER, REASON: SECTIONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) The disparate comments by Presidential Advisor Magzoub Al Khalifa and MFA Spokesman Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim in the September 20 edition of the independent daily "Al Adwa" illustrate the divisions within the National Congress Party (NCP) on the appointment of Andrew Natsios as Special Envoy to Sudan. Responding to a question from a reporter on September 19, Al Khalifa said that the Sudanese government would engage in a dialogue with any "power" in an attempt to increase stability and to promote a peaceful solution to the Darfur conflict. He asserted, however, that Natsios' appointment would not alter the Sudanese government's rejection of UN intervention in Darfur.

¶2. (C) Ibrahim's remarks in "Al Adwa" were more vitriolic. He called the appointment a "flagrant interference" in the internal affairs of Sudan and criticized the USG for setting a double-standard by demonizing Sudan while simultaneously asking for dialogue. "America deems Sudan as uncooperative and considers it among the countries that violate religious rights," said Ibrahim, "and at the same time demands that Sudan accept a special American envoy on Darfur issues." (Note: The reference to religious rights reflects ongoing Sudanese government criticism of the recent International Religious Freedom Report. End note.)

¶3. (C) Comment: Though both men are associated with hard-line elements of the NCP, Al Khalifa's political standing within the Sudanese government is stronger than Ibrahim's. As such, Ibrahim would not have outflanked him without high-level support, most likely from State Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Karti. President Bashir's only public comment on the issue was that Khartoum would "study" the appointment; this came after the "Al Adwa" article's publication. The upper echelons of the NCP leadership have yet to coalesce around a party line, and Bashir will no doubt build support for a common position on the appointment when he returns to Khartoum on September 21. End comment.  
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